

8 Spaniards Arrested for Fighting in Eastern Ukraine

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Eight Spanish nationals have been arrested in their home country for fighting in the conflict-torn Ukrainian region of Donbass alongside pro-Russian separatists there, state news agency TASS reported Friday.

Spanish police officers detained the suspected fighters in six areas of Spain early on Friday morning, the report said. They are accused of conspiracy to murder, illegal possession of weapons and explosives, and committing acts damaging to Spain's interests abroad, TASS quoted a Spanish police source as saying.

The fighters' objective was to create international brigades in Donbass like those fighting against Franco during the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, TASS reported, citing an interview with one of the suspects with Spanish news agency Europa Press.

Spanish media has in recent months reported on "anti-capitalist" Spanish nationals who have gone to eastern Ukraine "to take part in the fight against the new fascist threat in Europe," TASS reported.

Russian state media and the pro-Russian rebels describe the new pro-European government that came to power following large-scale street protests that culminated in the ouster of Ukraine's previous president, Viktor Yanukovich, as "fascists" and the "Kiev junta."

While far-right groups were prominent in the street protests, they account for fewer than 10 percent of seats in the Kiev parliament.

Other foreign combatants have previously been reported to be fighting on both sides of the conflict in Ukraine, including fighters from Russia, the United States, Sweden, Italy and France.

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